

VETERAN Tony Horseman, Wycombe Wanderers' leading striker for over a decade, gave his club an ideal start to the season on Saturday with two goals in the opening Rothmans Isthmian League encounter at Ilford. But goalscoring apart, "Bodger's" allround game was a model lesson to the five newcomers in the side and on this form, it seems he will be playing for another ten years at Wycombe.

Wanderers manager Brian Lee, with a definite selection problem on his hands, included five of the many new players training with the club this season. One of the main surprises was the inclusion of Peter Anderson, who was preferred to Dave Bullock at centre half. Perhaps the fact that Anderson was playing against his old club swung the verdict.

Last year's Enfield defenders Phil Wood and Roger Grant came into the back four while Tony Brothers joined Mick Holifield and Larry Pritchard in midfield and Steve Perrin partnered Horseman and Keith Searle upfront.

Of the five, Wood and Grant looked the pick of the bunch. Anderson, despite his stature, was given a testing afternoon by the home forwards while Brothers, suffering from blistered feet, went off the boil in the second half. Perrin looked forceful upfront but lacked the finer skills of his fellow front-runners.

It was last year's regulars that

really stood out on Saturday. Horseman has already been mentioned and another player who reached top form was Mick Holifield. Mick rattled home a superb first goal and then went on to play one of his best games for the club. He tended to overshadow a rather disap-

flash and cracked in a superb left foot volley from outside the box, leaving goalkeeper Paul James helpless.

Tony Horseman burst onto the scene in the 26th minute when only the width of a post

referee J. Godfrey had refused an Ilford appeal when Holifield brought down Williamson seconds earlier.

Ken Pope's scything lunge on Searle, however, was the more obvious penalty and Tony Horseman duly obliged by

for offside. Maskell was out like a shot to parry the danger.

Two minutes later, however, in injury time, Maskell was caught out by a dipping volley from Ilford's Dave Bullock — the ball slipping through his

workrate. With Ilford buzzing busily, few players had time to control the ball and look around before making the pass. Pritchard being one of the few exceptions.

Just when substitute Rob Williams was about to replace Brothers, the blonde midfielder laid on the third and crucial goal. He arched over a long cross to Searle who headed back into the middle for Horseman to control and slip the ball wide of James.

Williams did come on for Brothers two minutes later but only after the latter had set up a great chance for Holifield. A clever lofted pass left Holifield clear of the defence but again James was allowed to come out and parry the ball.

For the remainder of the game, Wanderers tended to bunch in midfield, restricting their attacking ability. It was here that Ken Swain was badly needed to stretch defences to the flanks.

This sort of problem, however, is easy to iron out and on this showing alone, the prospects look decidedly healthy at Loakes Park this term.

ILFORD: P. James, D. Bullock, K. Pope, J. McCavna, D. Guiver (sub. 1, Harper 40 mins.), D. Bowhill, J. Geddes, J. Bookman, M. Taylor, D. Fifield, S. Williamson.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, D. Gambin, P. Wood, P. Anderson, R. Grant, A. Brothers (sub. R. Williams 70 mins.), L. Pritchard, M. Holifield, A. Horseman, K. Searle, S. Perrin.

Referee: J. Godfrey.
Half time: 2-1. Goalscorers: Wycombe (H. 21), Horseman (21 pen.) 33, 68).

By STUART EARP; Ilford 1, Wycombe Wanderers 3

pointing Larry Pritchard on the day.

All in all, it looked a highly promising side, well balanced and with few weaknesses. How they will stand up to pressure, however, remains to be seen. Ilford mounted a concerted assault on the Wycombe net at the start of the second half on Saturday, and for a time, the visitors looked decidedly shaky.

One promising aspect, however, was the amount of goalscoring chances created. Wycombe should really have pocketed the £40 offered by the sponsors for a three clear goal victory as they had more than enough opportunities.

Holifield wasted a couple of those chances early on with poor shooting, but after ballooning the ball clean out of the ground, he more than made up for the miss with a brilliant opening goal in the 21st minute.

Searle, homing in on the Ilford goal area, was tackled by Jeff Bookman about 30 yards out. Holifield was on the ball in a

robbed him of what would have been a hat-trick. Horseman himself was felled by Dave

Guiver on the edge of the box and although faced by a screen man wall, "Bodger" managed to bend a shot around the defence. The ball cannoned off the upright and was scrambled clear.

With Brothers fighting well in midfield, plenty of possession came Wycombe's way and it was as no surprise when they went two up after 33 minutes, ironically, it came in the shape of a penalty, ironic because

sending James the wrong way with his spot kick.

Ken Pope, who gave away the penalty, was somewhat unfortunate to be booked for hands after 40 minutes. With a good deal of cash at stake, a booking these days has far more serious consequences.

Ilford, who tended to mar potentially good moves by inaccurate passing, almost reduced the arrears just on half time when substitute Ian Harper, coming on for the injured Guiver after 40 minutes, broke clear with Wycombe appealing

hands. Harper had an easy task of placing the ball into an empty net.

The goal certainly proved a fillip for Ilford, who threw all they had at Wycombe after the break. Bowhill struck the upright with a first time effort and then Harper forced Maskell to turn his well placed shot around the post for one of three early Ilford corners.

Larry Pritchard swung the balance back to Wycombe with a long range drive that brought a full length save from James, tipping the ball over the crossbar but Wycombe's only reward from the effort was a goalkick. Keith Searle maintained the pressure when he found himself a couple of yards clear of the home defence. Sidestepping Pope he had only James to beat but the 'keeper did well to spread himself and block what seemed a certain goal.

Although Wycombe were still creating the chances, they fell away in midfield and never matched their first half

John on target

JOHN DELANEY, the Wycombe Wanderers skipper and centre half who joined third division Bournemouth at the end of the last season, is fast making a name for himself. John has played in all the pre-season friendlies and scored the only goal on Saturday to beat West Bromwich Albion.

Other ex-Wycombe players in the news are Viv Busby, who led the Fulham attack against Birmingham on Saturday, and Mick "Munch" Mellows came up against John Delaney in a friendly last week. He was playing for Portsmouth and laid on the pass for Pompey's goal in the 1-1 draw.